

NATIONAL DAY OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Mr. PRYOR. Madam President, I rise today with great pleasure to commend an exceptional group of my constituents and acknowledge September 12, 2007, as the National Day of Encouragement. The concept behind the National Day of Encouragement was developed in June 2007 as part of the National Leadership Forum at Harding University in Searcy, AR.

The National Leadership Forum, NLF, was composed of a group of enterprising high school students from around the country who were challenged to think of constructive ways to help their respective schools. One group said that discouragement or "the lack of encouragement" was the biggest problem they faced in school as well as in society today. From there, the idea of an official Day of Encouragement as a possible solution was born.

According to Andrew Baker, the co-director of NLF, the students chose September 12 as the National Day of Encouragement in hopes of "balancing the discouraging feelings of 9/11". The goal was to "challenge people not to just think about the idea of encouragement but to do something that will encourage someone else."

Since the conception of the National Day of Encouragement, grassroots efforts have been working towards creating a real sense of encouragement in cities, schools, places of employment, and homes. Even the smallest gesture such as a smile, a pat on the back, or a kind word, has the ability to communicate love and compassion that can raise spirits and spur motivation, especially on a day like September 12.

Americans have endured great hardship and heartbreak as a result of the terrorist attacks, but this has not broken our faith, courage and an unshakable commitment to freedom, democracy and, most importantly, each other. Yesterday, we remembered the tragedy of September 11, and we honored its victims. Today, we honor the victims again by remembering the sacrifices made by thousands of Americans to help the victims of the attacks and their families. Their acts of kindness and generosity inspired and encouraged the entire Nation.

I encourage my fellow colleagues, citizens of all ages, as well as those in schools, organizations, businesses, and media outlets, to encourage others on this day, through an act of service, a thoughtful letter, or words of kindness and inspiration to thereby boost the overall morale of all.

I would also like to commend the extraordinary group of high school students who participated in the National Leadership Forum this year. They have shown the ability to analyze critical issues with insight and intellect, and it is an honor to stand here before you today and recognize all of them and their accomplishments.

I yield the floor.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 130TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AMERICAN HUMANE ASSOCIATION

• Mr. ALLARD. Madam President, children and animals are the most vulnerable of our Nation's population, as they do not have a voice of their own. Organizations which aid animals or children are very important in creating and maintaining a humane, safe and just society. That is why I rise today to honor and praise the American Humane Association on the occasion of its 130th anniversary.

The American Humane Association is unique in America in that it is not only the oldest but the only national organization with the dual mission of protecting both animals and children. As a true American icon of humanity, the American Humane Association has been the voice of the most vulnerable both animals and children—for each and every one of its 13 decades of existence.

American Humane was formed on October 9, 1877, with the vital mission of protecting both children and animals from abuse, neglect, cruelty and exploitation. Over those years covering much of two centuries, American Humane has actively and successfully promoted humane values and education, built significant public awareness and understanding, and has developed programs and processes that effectively protect both children and animals. It has been a leader in advancing humanity in this Nation and has been a model for the rest of the world to see and emulate.

Among numerous other initiatives, American Humane, based in Denver, CO, originated such programs as "Be Kind to Animals Week," and "Tag Day," to educate the public on the need to treat animals humanely and to adequately identify their animals. American Humane is the only organization to monitor and certify the making of movies to ensure "No Animals Were Harmed." The organization also created "The Front Porch Project," an initiative to educate communities on how to protect children from abuse, and it was the world's first organization to identify "The Link" between animal abuse and human violence.

I am grateful for American Humane's continuing good work in advancing humanity on a national scale. The United States of America is greatly enriched by the ongoing work of American Humane Association, and I congratulate the Association on this significant historical milestone.

(At the request of Mr. REID, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

HILTON HUMANITARIAN PRIZE TO TOSTAN

• Mrs. CLINTON. Madam President, I would like to commend the Senegalese-

based nonprofit organization Tostan, which today will receive the Conrad N. Hilton Humanitarian Prize. Tostan, founded by former Peace Corps volunteer Molly Melching, promotes basic education and helps to empower women and men to change their communities.

As one resident of The Gambia noted, "With this program, people will make change from within for themselves without anyone else's help."

The work of Tostan has transformed the lives of residents in Senegal and other African countries. While I was First Lady, I had the opportunity to visit Dakar to meet with Molly and the women and men who were working to address female genital cutting, FGC, in their communities.

I learned in these encounters that an extraordinary power is unleashed when people reach out to their neighbors and find common ground. When men and women begin to lift themselves up, they lift up their families and their communities as well.

Tostan is the catalyst for change in communities across Africa, and it produces results: More than 160,000 individuals have attended human rights and democracy classes run by Tostan; more than 1,000 community management committees—80 percent of which are headed by women—have benefited from Tostan's guidance; and more than 2 million people in over 2,000 villages have made a public commitment to ending practices like FGC or child marriage.

Indeed, earlier this year, women in Senegal announced that they will be seeking to make that country the first in Africa to eliminate FGC entirely within the next 5 years—a pledge that would not have been possible without the work of Tostan over these many years.

Tostan will be using the award money from the Hilton prize to further its activities in countries across Africa to end female genital cutting, improve literacy, and promote small business and community development. I look forward to learning how these additional resources are used in the expansion of their programs.

The work of Tostan is a shining example of how democracy works; how women's voices and men's voices, can be heard, and can lead to change in their communities. I would like to again congratulate Tostan for receiving the Conrad N. Hilton Humanitarian Prize.

RECOGNIZING APPALACHIAN STATE UNIVERSITY MOUNTAINEERS FOOTBALL TEAM

• Mrs. DOLE. Madam President, today I would like to recognize the Appalachian State University Mountaineers football team for pulling off one of the biggest upsets in college football history. To recognize this achievement, Senator BURR and I have introduced Senate resolution number S. Res. 309.

On September 1, 2007, the Appalachian State Mountaineers of the

NCAA Football Championship Subdivision, formerly known as Division 1-AA, beat the University of Michigan Wolverines, ranked fifth nationally, of the NCAA Football Bowl Subdivision, formally known as Division 1-A, by a score of 34-32 in front of 109,000 spectators at "The Big House" in Ann Arbor, MI. No Division 1-AA team has ever been victorious over a nationally ranked Division 1-A opponent.

The win over the Wolverines was an extraordinary team effort. Quarterback Armanti Edwards threw for 227 yards and three touchdowns while rushing for 62 yards and one touchdown. The receiving corps combined for 227 yards of offense with two touchdowns from Dexter Jackson and one from Hans Batichon. In addition, the defense had an outstanding game and forced two critical turnovers in the second half—one fumble recovery and one interception—to guide the Mountaineers to victory.

During the fourth quarter the Mountaineers came up with the special plays needed to complete the monumental win. With Appalachian State trailing 32-31, Brian Quick blocked a Michigan field goal setting-up what would become the game-winning drive. On the ensuing drive, kicker Julian Rauch put a 24-yard field goal through the uprights to move the Mountaineers ahead 34-32 with 26 seconds left in the game. The Mountaineers, however, still needed one more big play from its special teams. With just a few seconds remaining, Corey Lynch dramatically blocked a Wolverine field goal attempt to seal the victory.

After the final gun, head coach Jerry Moore, who put together a masterful game plan, was carried off the field by his players in victory. The Appalachian State Mountaineers' victory over the Michigan Wolverines demonstrates that any achievement is possible with hard work and a great deal of heart.

I applaud the tremendous effort by the players, head coach Jerry Moore, and the assistant coaches and support personnel who all played critical roles in this historic victory. In addition, I would like to congratulate Dr. Kenneth E. Peacock, chancellor of Appalachian State University, Charles Cobb, athletic director, and all of the students and fans to whom this win meant so much.●

30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CARLSBAD MEDICAL CENTER

● Mr. DOMENICI. Madam President, today I wish to recognize the Carlsbad Medical Center for reaching its 30th birthday. I had the pleasure of being the keynote speaker during the dedication ceremony in 1977. Since then, the hospital has grown and weathered many changes over the last 30 years.

The medical field has experienced many advances and changes in the past three decades. New technology has brought many new ways of treating patients. Technology has increased the

number of patients served and helped to increase test accuracy. The future will bring many more medical advances, and I am certain this facility will be ready for anything that comes its way.

The Carlsbad Medical Center has aged gracefully and along the way has helped thousands of patients in need. It has been an honor to watch this facility and the progress they have made over the last 30 years. I look forward to another 30 years of growth.●

SALUTING THE AUGUSTINE AND STRASSER FAMILIES

● Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, today I call to the attention of my colleagues three very special families from Rose Hill, IA, and their extraordinary contributions to our Nation.

First, a little bit of background. As we all know, the National Guard and the Reserves have been shouldering a huge share of the combat burden in Iraq and Afghanistan. They are not only away from their families, they are also away from their employers. Bear in mind that these are citizen soldiers. In civilian life, they are teachers, firefighters, farmers, attorneys, and members of just about every other profession. And when they are deployed, their employers also have to make sacrifices.

Every year, the Department of Defense presents its Freedom Award to a small number of employers that go above and beyond the call of duty in supporting employees who are deployed with the Guard or Reserve. This year, one of those employers is Augustine & Sons farm in Rose Hill, IA.

Augustine & Sons is not one of those big corporate conglomerate farms. We are talking about a family farm owned and worked by brothers Dan and Mike Augustine. They are the sixth generation of the Augustines to farm this land since it was homesteaded in 1852. They have just two employees on the farm, and one of those employees is Matthew Strasser, a first sergeant with the Iowa National Guard who is on his second deployment overseas. First Sergeant Strasser previously served in Kosovo, and he is now deployed in Afghanistan.

The next time we see one of those bumper stickers that says, "Support Our Troops," we should think of the Augustine families. When First Sergeant Strasser left for Afghanistan, the Augustines lost one-half of their two-man workforce. But the Augustine brothers have continued to pay his entire salary, including an annual bonus. The Strasser family continues to live rent-free in a house on the farm. The Augustine families look in on the Strassers like they are just one big family—helping with chores, taking the boys fishing, and much more.

It is just an extraordinary story of good, decent people going the extra mile—I should say, the extra 100 miles—to extend a helping hand and to

be endlessly generous. The Augustines may have a relatively small farm, but they have very big hearts.

The Augustine and Strasser families are in Washington today, and the Augustines will be presented with a 2007 Freedom Award at a special dinner this evening. It was a great honor to have them at my weekly constituent breakfast this morning. I had the pleasure of meeting Dan Augustine, his wife Teresa and son Ryan; Mike Augustine, his wife Leesa, and son Caitlin; and Jessica Strasser, the wife of 1SG Matthew Strasser, and their sons Reece and Tyler.

I am sure that the entire Senate joins me in saluting 1SG Matthew Strasser for his courageous service in Afghanistan and also for the sacrifices on the homefront by Jessica Strasser and their sons. We also are deeply grateful to the Augustine families for their generosity and their very special brand of patriotism.

Yesterday, Americans commemorated the anniversary of the September 11, 2007, attacks. It has always struck me that those attacks, which represented humanity at its very worst, have led to so many acts of generosity and sacrifice that represent humanity at its very best. The Augustine and Strasser families make me very proud to be an American, and it was wonderful to meet them this morning.●

HONORING MAJOR GENERAL MICHAEL A. GORMAN

● Mr. JOHNSON. Madam President, today I pay tribute to MG Michael A. Gorman. September 15, 2007, will mark the end of an illustrious, 41 year career that began on March 7, 1966. Major General Gorman is a home-grown South Dakotan who has served his State and Nation with distinction.

Major General Gorman began his distinguished service to the Nation by enlisting in the South Dakota Army National Guard in 1966. In 1974, he was commissioned an engineer officer upon graduating from the South Dakota Officer Candidate School program. He has held numerous positions in the 109th Engineer Battalion, commanded South Dakota's 88th Troop Command, served as Director of Human Resources, Deputy Chief of Staff for Logistics, and Assistant Adjutant General for the South Dakota Army National Guard. Major General Gorman also serves on the Governor's cabinet as the Secretary of Military and Veteran's Affairs. In this capacity, he is the principle adviser to the Governor on military and veteran matters. He is concluding his meritorious career as the Adjutant General for the South Dakota National Guard.

I would like to personally thank Major General Gorman for his service as the Adjutant General with the South Dakota National Guard. His military service, patriotism, and dedication to the National Guard and South Dakota's veterans have been invaluable, and I commend him for his